

7 Jan 2020: Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [State can regulate minority institutions, says Supreme Court](#)

Context:

- The Supreme Court has held that the state is well within its rights to introduce a regulatory regime in the “national interest” to provide minority educational institutions with well-qualified teachers in order for them to “achieve excellence in education.”
- The managements of minority institutions cannot ignore such a legal regime by saying that it is their fundamental right under Article 30 of the Constitution to establish and administer their educational institutions according to their choice.

Background:

- The judgment came on a challenge to the validity of the West Bengal Madrasah Service Commission Act of 2008.
- The State Act mandated that the process of appointment of teachers in aided madrasahs, recognised as minority institutions, would be done by a Commission, whose decision would be binding.
- The apex court upheld the validity of the 2008 Act, saying the Commission was composed of persons with profound knowledge in Islamic Culture and Islamic Theology.

TMA Pai Foundation case:

- Referring to the 11-judge Bench decision in the TMA Pai Foundation case, Justice Lalit, who authored the verdict, said Article 30(1) (right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice) was neither absolute nor above the law.
- "When it comes to the right to appoint teachers, in terms of law laid down in the TMA Pai Foundation case, a regulation framed in the national interest must necessarily apply to all institutions regardless whether they are run by majority or minority as the essence of Article 30(1) is to ensure equal treatment between the majority and minority institutions."
- "An objection can certainly be raised if an unfavourable treatment is meted out to an educational institution established and administered by minority. But if ensuring of excellence in educational institutions is the underlying principle behind a regulatory regime and the mechanism of selection of teachers is so designed to achieve excellence in institutions, the matter may stand on a completely different footing," Justice Lalit wrote.

Details:

- In the judgment, a Bench of Justices Arun Mishra and U.U. Lalit said the regulatory law should, however, balance the dual objectives of ensuring a standard of excellence as well as preserving the right of the minorities to establish and administer their educational institutions.
- The court explains how to strike a “balance” between the two objectives of excellence in education and the preservation of the minorities’ right to run their educational institutions.
- For this, the court broadly divides education into two categories – secular education and education “directly aimed at or dealing with preservation and protection of the heritage, culture, script and special characteristics of a religious or a linguistic minority.”
- When it comes to the latter, the court advocated “maximum latitude” to be given to the management to appoint teachers.
- The court reasons that only “teachers who believe in the religious ideology or in the special characteristics of the concerned minority would alone be able to imbibe in the students admitted in such educational institutions, what the minorities would like to preserve, profess and propagate.”
- However, minority institutions where the curriculum was “purely secular”, the intent must be to impart education availing the best possible teachers.

1. Stressed urban cooperative banks to face PCA-like curbs

Context:

- The [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#) has decided to impose restrictions on urban cooperative banks (UCBs) for deterioration of financial position, in line with the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework that is imposed on commercial banks.
- The move comes in the wake of the recent crisis at the PMC Bank.
- PCA is intended to intervene early and take corrective measures in a timely manner, so as to restore the financial health of banks that are at risk by limiting deterioration in their health and preserving their capital levels.

Details:

- Under the revised Supervisory Action Framework (SAF), UCBs will face restrictions for worsening of three parameters:
 1. When net non-performing assets exceed 6% of net advances.
 2. When they incur losses for two consecutive financial years or have accumulated losses on their balance sheets.
 3. If the capital adequacy ratio (CAR) falls below 9%.
- The RBI has said that action would be taken in case of serious governance issues.
 - UCBs will be asked to submit a board-approved action plan to correct the situation like reducing net NPAs below 6%, for restoring the profitability and wiping out the accumulated losses, and increasing capital adequacy ratio to 9% or above within 12 months.
 - The board of the UCB will be asked to review the progress under the action plan on a quarterly/monthly basis and submit the post-review progress report to the RBI.
 - The RBI may also seek a board-approved proposal for merging the UCB with another bank or converting itself into a credit society if CAR falls below 9%.
 - It can impose restrictions on declaration or payment of dividend or donation without prior approval if any one of the risk thresholds is breached.
 - Some of the other curbs include restricting fresh loans and advances carrying risk-weights more than 100% on incurring capital expenditure beyond a specified limit and on the expansion of the balance sheet.
- The RBI said actions such as the imposition of all-inclusive directions under Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, and issue of show-cause notice for cancellation of banking licence may be considered when continued normal functioning of the UCB is no longer considered to be in the interest of its depositors/public.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. New data relay satellites to keep Gaganyaan crew in touch with Earth

Context:

India plans to ring in its own era of space-to-space tracking and communication of its space assets in 2020 by putting up a new satellite series called the Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS).

Details:

- The IDRSS is planned to track and be constantly in touch with Indian satellites, in particular, those in low-earth orbits which have limited coverage of earth.
- In the coming years, it will be vital to [ISRO](#), whose roadmap is dotted with advanced Low Earth Orbit (LEO) missions such as space docking, space station, as well as distant expeditions to the moon, Mars and Venus. It will also be useful in monitoring launches.
- The first beneficiary would be the prospective crew members of the Gaganyaan mission of 2022 who can be fully and continuously in touch with mission control throughout their travel.
- Work on the two IDRSS satellites planned has begun. The first of them will be sent towards the end of 2020. It will precede the pre-Gaganyaan experimental unmanned space flight which will have a humanoid dummy. A second one will follow in 2021. The two will offer near-total tracking, sending and receiving of information from the crew 24/7.

Other countries with relay satellite systems:

- Older space majors such as the U.S. and Russia started their relay satellite systems in the late 1970s-80s and a few already have around 10 satellites each. They have used them to monitor their respective space stations Mir and the International Space Station and trips that dock with them, as well as the Hubble Space Telescope.
- While the U.S. is putting up its third-generation advanced fleet of TDRS (Tracking & Data Relay Satellites), Russia has its Satellite Data Relay Network and Europe is building its own European Data Relay System. China is into its second generation Tianlian II series.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category:INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. The U.S. is weakened by Soleimani's killing

Context:

The U.S. killing Iranian Major General Qassem Soleimani, in an airstrike.

Background:

- Tensions between the U.S. and Iran have been increasing ever since the U.S. withdrew from the Iranian Nuclear deal and initiated its '**maximum pressure**' campaign on Iran through increased sanctions.
- **Iran had adopted the 'strategic patience' approach** in reaching out to other world powers while trying to resist the U.S. sanctions.

- The assassination of General Qassem Soleimani is the latest escalation which threatens to draw not just the two countries but the entire region to war.

Consequences:

Further escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran:

- General Qassem Soleimani was a **top Iranian military commander**, with a diplomatic passport. His **assassination is being viewed in Iran as a declaration of war**.
- There have been **large scale street protests in Iran** condemning the assassination and calling for revenge.
- In the holy city of Qom, a red flag was flown on the dome of Jamkaran Mosque signifying that Iran is prepared for a long war.
- In the current circumstances, there is **very little possibility of renegotiating the Iranian nuclear deal which alone can bring lasting peace to the region**.

Iraq's reaction:

- There was growing uneasiness between the U.S. and Iraq in the backdrop of U.S. airstrikes against Iraqi militias in recent weeks and the following **attack on U.S. embassy in Baghdad**.
- **The U.S.'s unilateral use of airpower within Iraq targeting Iraqi militias without the permission of the government has upset Iraq's government**. It claims that the attacks are against **the security and sovereignty of Iraq**.
- Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis was also killed in the U.S. airstrike. He was then the deputy commander of the Popular Mobilisation Forces, an umbrella organisation of several Iraqi Shia militias. He was an Iraqi political leader who commanded a militia which is understood to be part of the Iraqi army.
- Iraq has claimed that the killing of Soleimani and al-Muhandis was **an act of aggression against Iraq**.
- The lawmakers, under pressure from both the public and militias to act against the U.S. after the killing, has passed **a resolution to expel the thousands of U.S. troops stationed in Iraq** and deny them access to its airspace, land or water. The U.S. troops had been in Iraq on an invitation from the Iraqi government to fight the Islamic State.
- Though the Parliament itself doesn't have the authority to expel foreign troops, a resolution passed in Parliament is a call to the executive branch to act. The Iraqi Prime Minister has stated the intent to ask U.S. troops to leave.
- The Iraqi Parliament also called upon the Prime Minister to make **a formal complaint to the UN against the U.S. for "serious violations and breaches of Iraqi sovereignty"**.

Pro-Iranian groups in the region:

- Ever since Gen. Soleimani took over the Quds Force in 1998, he expanded the operations of the unit, by deepening Iran's links with its **proxy groups such as Hezbollah and the Badr Organisation** or building new militias such as the **Shia Popular Mobilization Units and Houthis**. Soleimani was viewed as the unifying force that held the Resistance Axis together. **The Resistance Axis is a concept that refers to the pro-Iranian groups in the region**.
- Though the primary objective of the airstrike was to target Iran, the U.S. act is being viewed as an attack on Iraq and on the pro-Iranian movements like Hezbollah from Lebanon and Liwa Fatemiyoun from Afghanistan.
- There are concerns regarding **attacks by pro-Iranian groups across the West Asian region** where thousands of U.S. troops and official personnel are stationed.

Allies concerns:

- **U.S. allies in the region and major world powers** like France, Germany and the U.K. have either expressed **concerns over U.S. actions** or have stayed neutral with no one backing U.S. actions.
- **The Arab League** which has generally accused Iran of sowing chaos in the region, too has expressed concern over the situation and asked for calm.

Moves on the international stage:

- Iran's ambassador to the UN has written to the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, and the UN Security Council President to condemn the assassination.
- Though UN Secretary-General has expressed deep concerns over the circumstances, he stopped short of criticizing the U.S.
- China and Russia may table a resolution at the UN that calls for calm as well as criticize the U.S. which could be vetoed by the U.S.

Concerns:

U.S. statements after the assassination:

- **Given the isolation being faced by the U.S. on the international stage**, the U.S. has tried to justify its actions by its **information war**. The U.S. has been trying to link Soleimani to terrorist attacks around the world. None of this has won the U.S. any support on the international stage.
- It is not helping the U.S.'s cause that its political leaders have been making **dangerous and provocative statements after the assassination**.
- The U.S. President has claimed that the U.S. would target and strike "52 Iranian sites", including cultural ones if Iran tries to attack American assets or personnel in the West Asian region. **Attacks on cultural sites are considered a flagrant war crime**.

Straining of ties between Iraq and the U.S.:

- **Iraq is a crucial ally for the U.S. in the war against terrorism in West Asia**, and the deterioration in the ties has only hastened after the U.S. act.
- Iraq, forced to choose between the U.S. and Iran, has chosen to stand with Iran given the fact that Iran is Iraq's neighbour and possesses enormous influence in the region and within Iraq as well.
- The U.S. has threatened Iraq with sanctions and a bill for billions of dollars if the U.S. troops are forced to pull back. This approach has only escalated the situation to a three-cornered crisis involving the U.S., Iraq and Iran.

Desperate and irrational policy:

- **The U.S. intervention in Iraq in 2003 gave rise to the worst kind of violence in Iraq and Syria and provided a massive advantage to Iran** not only in Iraq but also across the region weakening the strategic position of its allies (Israel and Saudi Arabia).
- The U.S. attempts to regain its authority in the region has not worked, neither the attempt to overthrow the government in Syria nor the sanctions against Iran.
- The U.S. approach towards Iran has been termed as irrational given that the U.S. decision to pull out of the Iran nuclear deal was the trigger for the escalation and the present crisis.
- **The recent escalation has isolated the U.S. further and deepened anxieties amongst its increasingly isolated regional allies, Israel and Saudi Arabia.**

Way forward:

- Given the bad **consequences of the past wars in the region** and the fact that a full-fledged war would be in no country's interest, there is an urgent need for de-escalation.

- Europe, which has good ties with both the U.S. and Iran, should use its diplomatic channels to bring together the U.S. and Iran for talks and prevent an all-out war.

For more information on this issue: [CNA dated Jan 5, 2020](#)

Category: EDUCATION

1. Doing away with ad hoc teachers

Context:

Protest in Delhi by the Delhi University Teachers' Association.

Background:

- A circular issued by the Delhi University was seen by the ad hoc teachers who constitute an estimated 4,500 in Delhi University, as an attempt to hire them as guest teachers instead. Given that such a move would disadvantage them further has prompted the ad-hoc teachers to protest.
- According to the University's guidelines, an ad hoc appointment may be made "in case there is a sudden, unexpected and short vacancy, arising out of sudden sickness or death, on medical grounds (including maternity leave), abrupt leave or any other situation that may disrupt the normal process of teaching-learning."

Details:

Importance of higher education:

- **The economic progress** in most of the developed countries can be attributed to the contribution of their higher education institutes.
- There are ample examples of institutes of higher education being **centres of social changes and revolutions**. The Indian independence struggle is said to have been strengthened and revitalized by student activism in the universities.
- **A healthy and civilized society depends, in part, on the quality of higher education.**

State of Indian higher education system:

- In the last 30 years, higher education in India has **witnessed rapid and impressive growth**. India's higher education system is the **third-largest in the world**, next to the United States and China.
- However, Indian universities **continue to lag behind world-class universities such as Harvard, Cambridge, and Oxford**.
- The Indian higher education system is **performing below par in terms of the questionable quality of output from the institutes**, and the very less amount of Research and Developmental works being undertaken.

Challenge of Ad-hoc Teachers:

- There are many factors that have resulted in the bad state of the education system today.
- One of the major factors is the **lack of job security among a vast majority of teachers** who have been rendering their services **on ad hoc or contractual basis** in universities, colleges and schools.

- **A culture of ad hocism has unfortunately percolated through India's education system** and has led to concerns among the temporary and contractual teachers.

Concerns:

Against UGC guidelines:

- The **UGC guidelines stipulate the universities to absorb the ad-hoc teachers into the permanent grade in the longer run.**
- Despite the guidelines, many ad-hoc teachers are hired only for a fixed number of months, and at the end of every academic session, they are removed.

Lack of growth opportunities:

- These ad-hoc teachers **remain on the periphery of the education system with very little opportunity to grow and increase their capabilities.** They are often not considered in government efforts like teacher training.
- They are often not allowed to mingle with the mainstream segment of teachers or considered equal to them even when they fulfil the rigorous guidelines that the UGC has laid down for the recruitment of teachers to permanent positions.

Lack of motivation:

- **Given the uncertainty in the service conditions, the concern of job security** drives them to appear for interviews at different places at the start of each academic session. This leads to a shortage of time and resources to improve their abilities in teaching.
- **Ad-hoc teachers are often subjected to humiliation and exploitation.** They do not receive the full salary that they are entitled to in accordance with the guidelines of the UGC. They often work at salaries less than the stipulated amounts. **The problem of underpayment of temporary and contractual teachers is mostly seen in private universities and colleges.**
- **Even the best of educators, if they are operating under the fear of expulsion or financial stress, are less likely to perform their roles well.**

Effect on educational outcomes

- The effect of the increasing ad-hocism and the challenges faced by such ad-hoc teachers can have a **profound impact on the educational outcomes.**
- When a well-qualified teacher is compelled to bear the brunt of financial exploitation, he or she seeks other avenues to enhance the income and often resorts to private coaching and tuition classes. **The quality of educational inputs in colleges declines considerably.**
- The mushrooming private coaching will place the **students from economically weaker sections at a disadvantageous position.**

Effect on the economy:

- The poor quality of teaching leads to a general lack of motivation and interest even amongst the students. **Industries cite skill shortage as one of the major factors contributing to the mounting number of unemployed graduates.**
- Given the fact that higher education is a core ingredient of the development of a country, any underperformance in the higher education system will have a profound effect on the country at large.

Way forward:

Revamping the education policy:

- Given the importance of human capital and skill acquisition in emerging economies like India, and the perils of neglecting them on India's development prospects, there is the **need to revamp the flawed education policy** which has created and encouraged ad hocism in the higher education system.

Other reforms:

- Teacher development programmes** should lie at the foundation of any effort to invigorate the education system in India. This effort should also involve ad hoc teachers.
- The reforms in the higher education system should focus on **enforcing higher standards of transparency in the working of the institutes and universities** which will help check if they are following the UGC guidelines and hold them accountable.

Category:POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. A case for including Tulu in the Eighth Schedule

Context:

The article argues for the inclusion of Tulu in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution and the benefits of such a move.

Background:

- There is **considerable linguistic diversity in India**.
 - India is one of the unique countries in the world that has the **legacy of diversity of languages**.
 - According to the 2001 Census, India has 30 languages that are spoken by more than a million people each.** There are 122 languages that are spoken by at least 10,000 people each.
 - India is home to 1,599 languages, including the various dialects.
 - Multilingualism is the way of life in India** as people in different parts of the country speak more than one language from their birth and learns additional languages during their lifetime.
- There is a **threat to the linguistic diversity of India**.
 - In recent years the language diversity is under threat as speakers of diverse languages are becoming rare and major languages are adopted after abandoning the mother tongues.
 - Most of the languages and dialects are restricted to specific regions and many of them are on the verge of extinction.**
 - 50 languages have become extinct in the past five decades.
- The constitutional provisions and the language policies** have tried to conserve the linguistic diversity of India.
 - Article 29 of the Constitution** provides that a section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture have the right to conserve the same.
 - Under the Constitution, provision is made for the **appointment of Special Officer for linguistic minority** with the sole responsibilities of safeguarding the interest of language spoken by the minority groups.
 - The language policy of India provides a guarantee to protect the linguistic minorities.**
 - The Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India** lists the official languages of the Republic of India. The Constitution of India has **recognised 22 official languages**.

Details:

- Despite the many constitutional provisions in place and the language policy of India which provides a guarantee to protect the linguistic minorities, there have always been concerns over the non-inclusion of certain languages in the 8th
- The article argues for the inclusion of Tulu language in the 8th schedule of the Indian constitution based on the following facts:
 - **Sanskrit and Manipuri, both scheduled languages** have much lesser number of speakers than the non-scheduled languages like Tulu, Bhili/Bhilodi, Gondi, Khandeshi and Oraon. The Census reports 18,46,427 native speakers of Tulu in India.
 - **Tulu, a Dravidian language has speakers spread across the two coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi in Karnataka and Kasaragod district of Kerala.**
 - Robert Caldwell in his book, A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Or South-Indian Family of Languages, has called Tulu as “one of the most highly developed languages of the Dravidian family”.

Significance:

For Tulu language:

- Inclusion of Tulu in the Eighth Schedule would lead to Tulu getting **recognition from the Sahitya Akademi** which would only help the cause of Tulu language.
- Tulu books would be translated into other recognised Indian languages, thus increasing the reach and influence of Tulu literature.
- **Members of Parliament and MLAs will be allowed to speak in Tulu in Parliament and State Assemblies, respectively.**
- Candidates can opt to write all-India competitive examinations like the Civil Services exam in Tulu.

For India:

- **The Yuelu Proclamation, made by the UNESCO at Changsha, The People’s Republic of China, in 2018,** is an important step in recognizing the importance of linguistic diversity and the subsequent benefits arising out of it.
 - The protection and promotion of linguistic diversity help to **improve social inclusion and partnerships** among the people of different languages.
 - It guarantees the rights for native speakers of endangered, minority, indigenous languages, as well as non-official languages and dialects to **receive education in their own languages.**
 - It helps to **reduce social inequality**, if any, between the different native speakers. It will enhance the social inclusion level in society.
 - It will also help encourage the speakers to participate in a series of actions to **promote cultural diversity, protect endangered language and intangible cultural heritages.**
- Placing all the deserving languages on an equal footing will **promote social inclusion and national solidarity in India.** It will reduce the inequalities within the country to a great extent.

Way forward:

- **India must accommodate this plethora of languages in its cultural discourse and administrative apparatus.**
- Tulu, along with other deserving languages, should be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in order to substantially materialise the promise of **equality of status and opportunity** mentioned in the Preamble.
- There is the need to understand the fact that conserving the distinct language, script or culture is not the duty of the state alone. Both the **state and the citizens have an equal responsibility to conserve the distinct language, script and culture of a people.**

- There is the need for increased efforts at the societal level, in which the **communities have to take part in the conservation of language diversity that is part of cultural wealth.**

F. Tidbits

1. 600 check dams to be built across Telangana

- 600 check dams have been sanctioned across the State of Telangana under Phase I of the irrigation development project.
- Of them, 84 will be constructed in Adilabad district at a cost of about ₹200 crores to irrigate crops on nearly 11,000 acres. The hilly district has umpteen number of hill streams, but nil water harvesting structures.
- The check dams will not only retain excess water during monsoon but will also improve the groundwater level. This will take care of the drinking water needs of the local population.

2. Don't send children excluded from Assam NRC to detention camps: Supreme Court

What's in News?

The [Supreme Court](#) ordered that children excluded from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam but whose parents/guardians/caregivers are part of the final list, should not be sent to detention camps or separated from their loved ones at any cost.

- An application said, “the unreasonable manner in which children have been excluded from the NRC Final List even when their parents are included is in direct contravention of the State’s obligation towards children as envisaged under Article 15 (3), Article 39 (e) & (f), Article 45 and Article 47 of the Constitution of India, and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015”.

Background:

- Over 19 lakh people in Assam have been excluded from the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) list that was published on August 31, 2019.
- NRC preparation was monitored by the Supreme Court.

3. Oil tops \$70 as Iran, Trump trade threats

What's in News?

Oil prices jumped by about 1%, pushing Brent above \$70 a barrel, as rhetoric from the United States, Iran and Iraq fanned tensions in West Asia after a U.S. airstrike killed a top Iranian military commander.

Note:- Brent Crude is a major trading classification of sweet light crude oil that serves as one of the two main benchmark prices for purchases of oil worldwide.

- U.S. President Donald Trump has threatened to impose sanctions on Iraq, the second-largest producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), if U.S. troops were forced to withdraw from the country.
- Baghdad earlier called on the U.S. and other foreign troops to leave Iraq.
- Trump also said that the United States would retaliate against Iran if Tehran was to strike back after the killing.

Details:

- The situation brings lots of uncertainty and geopolitical tea-leaf reading on reactions.
- While the closure of the Strait of Hormuz remains a very unlikely event, the deterioration in Iraq bears supply risks.

4. Pelosi says House to vote on a resolution to limit Trump's military actions regarding Iran

- The U.S. House Speaker said that the House will introduce and vote on a war powers resolution to limit U.S. President Donald Trump's military actions regarding Iran.
- It reasserts Congress's long-established oversight responsibilities by mandating that if no further Congressional action is taken, the Administration's military hostilities with regard to Iran cease within 30 days.

5. China's PLA begins major military exercises in Tibet

- The Chinese army has begun major military exercises in the high-altitude Tibet bordering India, deploying latest weapons including the Type 15 light battle tank and the new 155-MM vehicle-mounted howitzer, according to a media report.
- The People's Liberation Army (PLA) Tibet Military Command started its New Year exercises in which it has deployed helicopters, armoured vehicles, heavy artillery and anti-aircraft missiles across the region from Lhasa, capital of Tibet, to the border defence front lines with elevations of more than 4,000 metres.
- Both the tank and howitzer, which were revealed to the public on the National Day military parade in 2019, are specifically designed with advantages for plateau regions and can play important roles in safeguarding border areas, the report said.
- Their deployment in the Tibet Military Command will enhance PLA combat capability in the plateau regions, it quoted a military expert as saying.

Note:

- India-China Line of Actual Control (LAC) covers 3,488 km, including the border along Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of South Tibet.

6. ICAR to set up innovation fund to help farmers

What's in News?

A system will soon be put in place to scientifically validate, scale up and propagate the innovations of progressive farmers as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is poised to set up a Farmers' Innovation Fund.

- As part of this system, an innovation centre would be established in New Delhi where the innovations would be scientifically validated. Farmers would also be allowed to pursue research under the system.
- Pointing out that innovations of farmers were being documented by the Krishi Vigyan Kendras, it is believed that additional system would encourage farmers to continue their work.
- The intention of setting up this system is to link farmers and farming with science and to ensure that their farm practices are science-based.
- As part of efforts to encourage the use of technology in the farm sector, a linkage had been created between 105 start-ups and farmers.

G. PRELIMS FACTS

1. Pak. arrests main accused in Nankana Sahib vandalism case

What's in News?

The main accused in the recent vandalism at the Gurdwara Nankana Sahib in Pakistan's Punjab province was arrested and charged with a non-bailable section of the stringent anti-terrorism act and blasphemy.

Gurdwara Nankana Sahib:

- Gurdwara Nankana Sahib is also known as Gurdwara Janam Asthan.
- It is a site near Lahore.
- This is where the first Guru of Sikhs, [Guru Nanak](#), was born.
- The first gurdwara is believed to have been built at the site in the 16th century by the grandson of Guru Nanak, Baba Dharam Chand.
- The current gurdwara was built by Ranjit Singh in the 19th century.

2. Lysosomal Storage Disorders (LSD)

What's in News?

The Madras High Court has directed the Centre to consider providing medical care to economically poor patients suffering from the rare Lysosomal Storage Disorders (LSD), a group of more than 50 genetically inherited and potentially fatal disorders, as an issue no less than a "national emergency" and come up with a concrete plan, within a month, on sharing the financial burden with the State governments.

Details:

- Lysosomal storage diseases are a group of about 50 rare inherited metabolic disorders that result from defects in lysosomal function. They are inherited metabolic diseases.
- Lysosomes are sacs of enzymes within cells that digest large molecules and pass the fragments on to other parts of the cell for recycling. This process requires several critical enzymes. If one of these

enzymes is defective, because of a mutation, the large molecules accumulate within the cell, eventually killing it.

- Lysosomal storage disorders are caused by lysosomal dysfunction usually as a consequence of deficiency of a single enzyme required for the metabolism of lipids, glycoproteins (sugar-containing proteins), or so-called mucopolysaccharides.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to River Beas:

1. It is one of the major tributaries of River Indus.
2. The river originates near the Rohtang Pass, on the southern end of the Pir Panjal Range.
3. The river lies entirely within the Indian Territory.

Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. None of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Beas is a major tributary of River Indus.
- It originates near the Rohtang Pass, on the southern end of the Pir Panjal Range, close to the source of the River Ravi.
- It lies entirely within the Indian Territory.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Indian Council of Agricultural Research:

1. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is an autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education.
2. The Council is the apex body for coordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences in India.
3. The Union Minister of Agriculture is the President of ICAR.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 1, 2 and 3 only
- d. 2 and 3 only

Answer: c

Explanation:

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is an autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. Formerly known as Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, it was established on 16 July 1929 as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The Council is the apex body for co-ordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences in the entire country. The Union Minister of Agriculture is the President of ICAR.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Lysosomal Storage Diseases (LSD) are a group of rare inherited metabolic disorders.
2. LSD occurs due to mutations that occur in the nuclear genes.
3. Gaucher's Disease is a type of LSD.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1, 2 and 3 only
- b. 2 only
- c. 1 only
- d. 3 only

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Lysosomal Storage Diseases (LSD) are a group of rare inherited metabolic disorders.
- Lysosomal storage disorders are caused by lysosomal dysfunction usually as a consequence of deficiency of a single enzyme required for the metabolism of lipids, glycoproteins (sugar-containing proteins), or so-called mucopolysaccharides.
- Gaucher's Disease is a type of Lysosomal Storage Diseases (LSD). It is one of the most common rare diseases recorded in India.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Prompt Corrective Action (PCA):

1. PCA is a framework under which banks with weak financial metrics are put under watch by the World Bank.
2. The PCA framework deems banks as risky if they slip below certain norms on three parameters namely capital ratios, asset quality and profitability.

Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: a

Explanation:

Prompt Corrective Action or PCA is a framework under which banks with weak financial metrics are put under watch by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The PCA framework deems banks as risky if they slip below certain norms on three parameters namely capital ratios, asset quality and profitability. PCA is intended to

intervene early and take corrective measures in a timely manner, so as to restore the financial health of banks that are at risk by limiting deterioration in their health and preserving their capital levels.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. With respect to the Yuelu Proclamation, discuss the significance of protecting linguistic diversity. Discuss the constitutional provisions available in the Indian Constitution to conserve the linguistic diversity of India. (15 marks, 250 words)
2. Despite the rapid and impressive growth in the higher education system in India, its performance has been below par. Comment. What is the importance of a vibrant higher education system for India? (10 marks, 150 words)

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